

February 22, 2013

To: Executive Board

Subject: **Silver 2 Silver Update**

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Background

Foothill Transit's Silver Streak service was implemented in March 2007 as a restructuring of Line 480 into a regional community connector service between the downtown Los Angeles business district and communities in the eastern San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. In its first three years, ridership grew steadily and the Silver Streak was established as Foothill Transit's first BRT-style service, providing quick commuter style access from Montclair, Pomona, and West Covina through the El Monte Station to destinations in Los Angeles' central business district.

Approximately four years ago, Metro introduced their Silver Line service between the El Monte Bus Station and the Artesia Transit Center through downtown Los Angeles. That service mirrors Foothill Transit's Silver Streak service along the busway and serves destinations in downtown Los Angeles two blocks to the west of the Silver Streak. Metro's Silver Line service has grown rapidly and is now at capacity along the El Monte Busway portion of the route.

In October of last year, the new El Monte Bus Station opened and included an updated Foothill Transit *Store* and a completely revamped two-level bus terminal. As part of the opening of the new El Monte Station and *Store*, Foothill Transit and Metro coordinated on the provision of seamless and truly regional "Silver Corridor" service whereby customers traveling between the El Monte Station and downtown Los Angeles were able to board either a Foothill Transit or a Metro bus for a common fare, using either Foothill Transit's or Metro's fare media.

This new Silver Corridor service, called Silver 2 Silver, was launched on October 14th, 2012. Some of its highlights include:

- One common Silver Corridor cash fare of \$2.45
- Shared passes between the Metro Silver Line and Foothill Transit Silver Streak between El Monte Station and Downtown L.A.
- Increased service on the Foothill Transit Silver Streak
- Shared marketing program
- One year demonstration period to determine viability

Analysis

There were a couple of factors that required consideration when looking at the initially progress of the Silver 2 Silver program. First, the initial launch period for Silver 2 Silver occurred during a period of decline in ridership. The months of October, November and December regularly experience on average a 4% decline compared to the previous months of January through September. This is a direct result of the holiday season and is a consistent phenomenon that can be tracked from year to year.

In addition, the Los Angeles region experienced a significant gas hike during the months of October and November of 2012 -- \$4.75 per gallon vs. \$3.71 a gallon for the same period in 2011. Foothill Transit's overall ridership showed significant increases as a result and then slowly declined as gas prices receded.

The Silver Streak did show overall ridership growth that was consistent with past gas price hikes during the last quarter. In addition, this growth did taper off as the holiday season progressed and gas prices began to normalize -- October – 15%, November – 12%, December – 9%.

Pass sharing between Metro and Foothill Transit is one of the key features of the Silver 2 Silver program, allowing Metro customers to board the Foothill Transit Silver Streak with a Metro pass and vice versa. While Metro saw a declining crossover of Foothill Transit customers to their Silver Line, Foothill Transit experienced a steady and significant increase of Metro customers using the Silver Streak:

Crossover to Metro from Foothill Transit:

- October - 486
- November - 341
- December - 272

Crossover to Foothill Transit from Metro:

- October - 3,207 (3%)
- November - 6,614 (6%)
- December - 6,895 (7%)

The total gain of ridership from Metro pass customers coming over to Foothill Transit during October, November, and December was 16,716, which is 5% of the total ridership for the Silver Streak during that period. It is important to note that despite a steady decrease in ridership growth during the holidays, the Silver Streak still saw a steady increase in riders coming aboard as part of the Silver 2 Silver program.



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Fiscal Impact

This is a receive and file item and accordingly there is no fiscal impact.

Sincerely,

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Director of Marketing and Communications

Doran J. Barnes
Executive Director